



COMMITTED TO   

SERVICE

SERVICE + CMA = SOBER

Billy U.

I had heard it said many times in CMA that “service keeps you sober.” And though there are many things I did to keep sober—for me, service was definitely key. The very first bit of service I did was to stay after meetings and put away chairs. Then, when I was a bit more at ease, I’d come early to set them up. Putting away chairs helped by giving me busy work so I could avoid having to look anyone in the eye or mingle with all the attractive male strangers. However, the more comfortable I became in the fellowship and in my own skin, the more I looked forward to coming early to set up. I was soon brave enough to volunteer to bring hospitality and be (gulp!) the spiritual timekeeper.

Then I moved on to the type of service known as a commitment. Even though I had previously shied away from the word *commitment* itself, and had it in my head at the time that taking a service commitment meant I would be forced to stay sober (Heaven forbid!) for the entire six-month term, I said yes to the nomination and I said yes when elected. Well, guess what? I did stay sober, and I believe that my first service commitment, being elected secretary of the Friday night “Living With HIV” topic meeting, helped to keep me clean and reach my first year of continuous sobriety—one week at a time. As my sponsor and everybody else reminded me, it is only one day (sometimes, one hour or one minute!) at a time that I work to stay sober. But I had practiced enough rigorous honesty at that point to know that if I did relapse, I could not in good conscience try to fake people out and keep my service commitment. There were nights when, believing it was too late at night to make a call (by the way, it is never too late at night to call a fellow when you’re in need), the one thing I had to help keep me from using was remembering that I had to show up for service later that week.

That led to other secretary and chair positions at other meetings. It got to the point where if I breathed in the general direction of a business meeting, I found myself getting elected to some service position or another! Treasurer, greeter, street monitor...inventory taker (kidding!). Surprisingly, I found I liked doing service; I felt connected to the fellowship, and more a “part of.” I found there were also things I didn’t like about some service positions, and then I became invested in attending business meetings to try to effect changes where I thought they would be helpful. And then

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SERVICE RETURNS

David H.

“You are a big part of my recovery.”

My sponsor has told me time and again how much my service is appreciated and how much I am loved in the fellowship of CMA. And every time he has told me that, I brush it off, partly due to embarrassment and disbelief, but mostly because I think he’s yanking my chain. Don’t get me wrong, I love doing service in CMA. Nothing makes me feel more grateful and worthwhile than to give back to the fellowship that freely handed me the tools to rebuild my life and my self-worth. I cannot do enough service to repay my debt to the fellowship that has given me a second chance. CMA’s only request is that I carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers; I am more than happy to do so.

Even with all the work I’ve done on myself, I battled with some depression recently. I started to isolate and only showed up when absolutely necessary for appointments or service commitments. I refused to go to fellowship, saying to myself that I would rather just go home and revel in my solitude. Early in my sobriety, entering this mode of self-pity would have been an indicator of an impending relapse, but because of the fellowship, I did not completely isolate. To my sponsor and to a few trusted fellows who reached out, I confided my feelings. Being out of work for the better part of three years was taking its toll, and I felt like damaged goods. Across the board, the message I received back was loud and clear: “You are a big part of my recovery.”

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

OUR TWELFTH STEP STATES THAT as a result of our spiritual awakening, we should try to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict still suffering and practice the principles of the other Steps in all of our affairs. Doing service is the Twelfth Step at work and is essential for our fellowship's survival. Without the dedication and commitment of our trusted servants at all levels, we could not continue to carry the message. But we don't need to have a service commitment in order to do service, which is the heart of our fellowship: one addict helping another. Keeping this in mind, we are able to become and stay sober, and help our fellows to do the same.

This theme of "giving it away to keep it" is echoed through all the articles in this issue, whether the service is done formally or informally. A couple of fellows describe how just by being present at meetings, they were given opportunities to take on service commitments. Some writers illustrate how by the example of other fellows, they learned about the positive effects of performing service and the sense of purpose it gives to the entire fellowship. One tells about how other fellows showed up for him even though his schedule prevented him from participating more in the fellowship. Finally, another article portrays how damaging his relationship with crystal meth was and the healing process of reaching out to the fellowship to be of service to himself.

We hope this issue of Crystal Clear enlightens you and elucidates how important service is, especially reaching out to fellows in need. We also encourage you to submit your own pieces for future issues! Comments, suggestions, and submissions can be sent to newsletter@nycma.org. ■

GIVING, NOT USING

Rodrigo S.

Forty-four days ago, before I entered CMA, the word *service* was not a part of my vocabulary. I thought it meant that other people were supposed to do something for me, like deliver a bottle at a club, bring me food on command at a restaurant, or provide me with cheap (if somewhat prolonged) sexual thrills. Little did I know that this small word would be the first part of a life-changing lesson that continues unfolding daily.

Up until this point, my life has been marked by selfishness. I used crystal to ensure that others would pay attention to me sexually and socially, and to be able to pay attention to myself without being wracked by self-hate. I used alcohol and other drugs to be sure that my social interactions with others, whether at bars or receptions, went the way I wanted them, the way I planned. I believed that offering someone a pipe or buying someone a drink were a sure way to ensure that he would like me. These acts—which I used to believe were extremely generous—ensured that I felt like I could control others' reactions to me.

Imagine my shock, then, at entering a room full of addicts who did not relate to each other in this petulant way. As soon as I entered the rooms, I realized that the majority of the people present did not want to use me for any purpose. Nor would they tolerate being used by me. The people

present in the rooms simply wanted to share. They wanted to give of themselves and to relay their stories to their fellows, both new and old, and to receive wisdom and support in return. The more they gave individually, the more the group as a whole received. Faced with our collective powerlessness over the drug, we have

no choice but to pool our resources to survive. I had finally found an environment where the zero-sum game of using others and being used had much less meaning than the phrase "give freely."

I am still going through my earliest moments of early sobriety. Yet no matter what happens to me, I know I have the power to transform the emotional detritus that crystal left behind into something valuable. To begin to heal myself and to save my life, all I have to do is open my mouth at a meeting and

share. I find it amazing and wonderful that this simple sharing, which can be accomplished by anyone who has ever suffered on account of a drug, lies at the heart of what this fellowship calls "service." As an addict, I know of no greater love than to join with others in giving of our lives to our fellows. ■



“THE MORE THEY
GAVE INDIVIDUALLY,
THE MORE THE GROUP
AS A WHOLE RECEIVED.”

WHAT IF I WANT TO WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER?

Contact a member of the
NYCMA Literature Committee.
You may also send an email to
newsletter@nycma.org.

RETURNS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Not only did this lift my spirits, but—damn it!—my sponsor was right.

The funny thing about people saying that to me was that they barely mentioned the “official” service I’d performed or in which I was currently involved. The fellows I talked to told me about how much they appreciated that even though I was having a rough time of it the past couple of years financially, I still came to meetings, raised my hand, and shared. They heard the message from me that I was staying sober one day at a time and dealing with life on life’s terms. They listened as I shared about my struggles trying to find a new place to live when I was close to being evicted, or to land a new job in financial services when

thousands of others were applying for the same positions. They thought to themselves that if I could stumble along to find my way through, so could they. I’d had no clue that my effect on my fellows was so profound.

way to help others is simply to raise my hand in a meeting and offer my experience, strength, and hope. The best part is that anyone with any amount of sober time, even one day, can do this.

“ANYONE WITH ANY AMOUNT OF SOBER TIME, EVEN ONE DAY, CAN HELP.”

When I was in early sobriety, I would often think to myself about how I could not wait to have enough clean time to be a GSR or the chair of a meeting. I thought that doing service in those roles would be the most effective way I could carry the message and have the biggest impact on my fellows. Little did I know until this recent bout of depression, the most effective

We must return this day-to-day service in kind. If someone’s share moved you, or if another fellow has reached out to help in a time of need, let them know how much you appreciate it and carry that gratitude forward by sharing in another meeting or helping another fellow struggling to stay sober. It is amazing how a few kind words can change someone’s path, even just for today. So with that, I humbly want to express my love and gratitude to everyone who has been even a small part of my recovery for the past few years by quoting my favorite singer, Kelly Clarkson: “Honestly, my life would suck without you.” ■

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER

Dale L.

When I was in rehab, I was told over and over that “service keeps you sober.” I had no idea what this meant until I came to my first meeting and heard the literature chair say, “Thank you for letting me be of service.” I soon realized that each person in the room was doing service by chairing, being secretary, doing the literature, or taking on any other commitment there is at a meeting. Had I known that standing at the door and greeting everyone was a commitment that didn’t have a time requirement, I would have done this immediately.

For me today, service truly does keep me sober. I have to remind myself when I have a CMA commitment

that I don’t do it to be popular; I show up and do service because I intend to stay clean and sober, and fulfill my commitment to myself and the fellowship. Anyone who does service is showing his or her commitment to staying sober. Any form of service shows a newcomer that this program works and that there are many ways of being part of it. ■

SERVICE-CMA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

came the even bigger lesson for me: acceptance when my ideas were not voted in or made part of the meeting.

Last year I attended an NYCMA intergroup meeting for the first time, and without even understanding what the position was, I was elected public information officer, which I later learned was a one-year commitment! Gradually, service in CMA has taught me how to make lon-

ger commitments to people (whom I care for), places (that I care about), and things (that I believe in). Now I serve as public information chair for NYCMA and co-secretary of the public information committee for CMA World. I have two projects in which I am heavily involved on the World level. You might think this stuff would give me a big head, but I tell you, the greatest gifts I am learning from World service are humility in the face of getting to know the amount of time and dedication that goes in to carrying the message effectively, and gratitude for the sanity and bouts of serenity I have today that allow me to concentrate and perform the service I have enlisted to do. With over three years of sobriety now, my suggestions are: Get involved, start where you are comfortable, and recognize that service is anything that you give of yourself to help the fellowship as a whole, or just one other fellow. Yours in service, —Billy U.

WHAT IS CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS? Crystal Meth Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other, so they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to lead a sober life and to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers. —from the CMA General Service pamphlet “What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?”



AUGUST 10, 2004, IS MY SOBRIETY DATE. THAT WAS day I was remanded to prison for selling methamphetamine to businessmen friends, an eight ball at a time. This I did so I could get high for free. I had been on house arrest at my brother's apartment for a year and had been pressuring my lawyer about getting on with prison, because we were pleading and it was a certainty. As long as I was on house arrest, the clock wasn't ticking: House arrest doesn't count toward your sentence. In addition to insisting I wear a chunky black plastic ankle monitor, the authorities had the risible notion that I should also stay clean until sentencing. Now, this all occurred before the Supreme Court decision that made the sentencing guidelines advisory, so I was looking at a minimum bid of 135 months (i.e. eleven years and three months). The maximum was life. I figured there was plenty of time for me to stay clean after I got to jail. Fortunately, I had kind friends who brought me drugs and the occasional young man, neither of which set off the ankle monitor, though the mandatory urinalysis was not as forgiving of the former. After five dirties, the court saw things my way and sent me to prison. The clock started and I waited to be formally sentenced.

So it had finally happened. Back in 1991, one of the many, many reasons I'd gone to AA was that I was one of those familiar

2001, I was smoking meth; by November 2001, I was selling it; in October 2003, I was arrested.

You have to give them credit: The feds are trying to do the right thing when they can get away with it. While I was at MDC (Metropolitan Detention Center) out in Brooklyn awaiting my sentencing, there was this wonderful lesbian drug counselor who would come up once or twice a week for group. Then I was sentenced to 87 months—my lawyer had found a tiny loophole in the law and my very sympathetic judge was happy to push me through it—and I was transferred to the prison camp at Butner, North Carolina. If meetings were offered there, I don't remember. What I do remember is that at that point, I had been in prison and dry for a total of eighteen months, and I just couldn't take four and a half more years of it. I had been talking to a doctor who had been sent to prison because he'd been working at a clinic that had committed Medicaid fraud. He hadn't known anything about the fraud and neither had the other doctors who worked there, but they were all indicted and one had already committed suicide. My friend also attempted it soon after he arrived at Butner but chickened out (his words), and he reported himself to the nurse. He told me he had overdosed on blood pressure medication, the same kind I took.

BY BILL C.

THE ASSOCIATE MEMBER

For this addict, it took a trip "inside" to stop hiding away on the outside.

addicts (you know who you are) who was sure there were undercover cops everywhere waiting to arrest me because I'd been smoking crack and shooting cocaine almost every day for five years. I was also drinking a fifth of Popov vodka every night to take the edge off, but I wasn't worried about that because it was legal. So I called up my friend Ed, who had gotten sober months before and thought I might have a problem also, and he took me to Midnight down on Houston Street. I knew the place—not all that long before it had been an after-hours club with plush sofas and red velvet curtains called Page Six. It had now become an AA meeting. Irony.

When I managed to put together ninety days, my sponsor suggested I speak and I did so. The problem was that my brain was still so fried I was completely incoherent. Though not so incoherent that I didn't know it: I stopped, I think mid-sentence, somewhere before the ten-minute mark. Someone from the floor shared that it was the worst qualification he'd ever heard. I wholeheartedly agreed.

It took me a couple of years, but I was finally able to put together some time, get a great boyfriend, and make some pretty great progress in my career. But there was a catch—and this is another familiar story, one I heard in a meeting just the other day: I was an "associate member" of AA. I attended meetings, did service, went out for fellowship, didn't drink, and that was about it. I was in a Twelve Step program except for the part about doing the Steps. I wasn't reading the literature, wasn't calling my sponsor, and wasn't being spiritual in the least. That lasted for seven years. Who knows how long it might have lasted? Lacking a real foundation, I was bound to come undone sooner or later. What did finally occur was that I blew a career setback into a career tsunami, walked out on the boyfriend, stopped going to meetings, and started hooking up online. By June

So one day after I got off the bus from work to go to lunch, I went to my locker and considered the new, full prescription for some time. I can't tell you why I didn't take it all; I had every intention of doing so, but I didn't, and I knew I wasn't going to. I had to figure out a way to make it through the next four and a half years. It turned out that way was to use what few tools I had learned from my time as an "associate member" of AA. The first thing I did was learn how to meditate from one of the Buddhist inmates. I was then transferred to Pennsylvania and started looking for new guys to show around. That's spending time with the newcomer, by the way. In prison you learn pretty quickly that the inmates there on drug cases fall into two groups: the criminals who were in it for the money and the hapless ones who were in it for the free drugs. It was the hapless I usually tried to work with. I talked about Twelve Step programs to lots of guys over the last four years, and I don't know if I helped any of them, but I do know that even though there were plenty of opportunities to drink and do drugs, I stayed sober the entire six years and three months.

I've been out of prison for almost seven months now and have remained sober. I am grateful to have a sponsor who has a sponsor, who is guiding me through the steps. I am humbled that I have sponsees, and I'm enormously grateful to be able to go to at least one AA or CMA meeting every day. I am also humbled that there have been and continue to be sober fellows who have helped me and guided me all along the way. So with the help of my Higher Power, one day at a time, my primary purpose is to stay clean and help another addict. That's service. That's fulfillment. I'm glad to have turned in my "associate membership" for the real thing.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF CMA

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding, praying only for the knowledge of God's will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to crystal meth addicts, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. AA is program of recovery from Alcoholism only—use of AA's Steps and Traditions, or an adapted version of its Steps and Traditions in connection with programs or activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to ourselves, to God, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

HEAVY LIFTING

Eduardo V.

I celebrated one year of continuous sobriety in June. In my opinion, how we apply the Twelve Steps in our lives is different for each of us. My sponsor's main suggestion for this first year was to not make any major changes in my life, including new relationships. However, at six months, I regained my old job which changed my life greatly. I didn't have too much time to come to meetings, but I tried to attend two or three times a week. I started missing my new CMA associations and friends, and I'm sure many wondered if I was out. But I stayed sober, contacting my sponsor for suggestions on how to keep my program strong. He told me to "keep it simple" and remember, "first things first." But the most important thing he said was to remain humble and to ask my Higher Power what He wants me to do. I will keep that with me forever. I learned when I was young about the gift of patience, but now I have truly discovered spirituality and humility. And that, to me, is the joy of service. During this last year, I was always doing service no matter how busy I was because it filled me with happiness and gratitude.

Recently, I had an experience that really demonstrated the importance of service. I had to look for a new apartment—once again, before the suggested year was over—so I started my search. I found a very nice one in a convenient location, and after fighting with landlords and housing agencies, I finally got the keys to move. It was chaotic, but little by little, things started to fall into place. That is, until I had to get a moving truck. My sponsor, his husband, and two other friends stayed with me the whole time, even though we were unable to get a truck until late in the day. They gave me the

best support and energy while we were moving—and we started at 6 PM and finished at 3 AM the next day. But there's more to this story.

While my sponsor and my sponsee brother were unloading the truck, I was bringing stuff from the elevator to the apartment door. My sponsor's husband, who is blind, was carrying the stuff into the apartment, and when I tried to help him become familiar with the space, he asked me to leave him alone and just keep hauling the things from downstairs. From time to time, I would check on him to see if needed some help, but he insisted on doing it himself. Soon, all that was left were small boxes and bags, and when I walked into the apartment, I was amazed. Everything was stacked neatly against the walls of each room. My eyes filled with tears. Some of us who have our sight cannot do what he did so quickly and orderly. The lessons I learned that night are that no matter who we are, we can always be of service, and that it is simple to get our lives in order if we take it little by little, one step at a time.

I have to thank my Higher Power for giving me the opportunity to have such amazing people around me to support and help me in my new sober life. We were all exhausted, but I was so glad that they were there for me. I fell on my knees that night and cried because I was so filled with gratitude. I am still filled with gratitude, because I have all of you as my new sober family; I have repaired my relationship with my own family; and I have returned to a job I love. I continue my commitment to do service in the rooms and reach out to those who need me. In the last three weeks, I have made friends with three newcomers and tried to make them feel welcome and comfortable. I let them know that this is a safe place for us, for addicts seeking recovery, because I want to give to them what was so freely given to me. ■

NYCMA share a day 2011

courage to change
saturday, october 1, 2011
gmhc

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

Andrew C.

In early sobriety, we are gently reminded that dating and new relationships may not be the best idea. Personally I agree, but the need for intimacy is powerful. The lack of it is why I started using and later, what motivated me to stop. Intimacy will play a big role in what is to become what I call my “big life.” As we all discover in early sobriety, without any lasting connections, our lives eventually become meaningless.

At one point early on, I looked down at my phone, and with the exception of my dad, it hadn't rung in about month. I suddenly became painfully aware that I hadn't been out of the house socially in six months. With all my friends gone, along with my ability to cultivate any kind of new relationship, I felt doomed. Those first months of sobriety were probably the worst of my life, and a brutal relapse ensued. I found myself totally comfortable with the idea that I was no longer a man but an “it” that required only the drug to survive. That constant struggle between picking up and putting down, between using and recover-

ing, was finally over and it felt good. After a long interview process I had finally found my new “captain,” and yes, her demands and increasing salary could be unreasonable, but her happiness became paramount to mine.

For most of my adult life, I have internalized my emotions, always afraid of others' reactions. Whenever I tried to open up, it usually fell upon deaf or, at least, very confused ears. From early on, I learned how to use sympathy to control an uncomfortable situation and eventually get what I want. My amazing addiction psychiatrist said it best: “You, unknowingly, have a way of making people feel sorry for you so they'll do your bidding,” or something along those lines. Not knowing how to form real relationships and living alone in my head instead left me with fabricated feelings and friendships. My only need was to not be alone, and eventually that need became crippling. My mind-set was to keep my prisoners happy no matter what the cost. This not only went for people I was dating but for friends as well. Once my ulterior motives became evident to my captives, they began to plan an exit strategy. The only way they stood a chance was if I grew tired of them first. If not, that

once generous and caring man would turn on them in some very desperate ways. This roller-coaster became exhausting; eventually, it closed me off from any form of long-lasting sexual relationship.

Before drugs, I avoided sex because it made me uncomfortable, and it still reminds me of a very bad time in my life. I think a big reason why I crave social intimacy so much in early sobriety is that I never really achieved any lasting sexual bonds. Meeting new people in an unpredictable environment has never been my strong suit, but now, instead of hiding from people, I'm seeking them out. I owe this profound change to all of the people I encounter every day in meetings—and maybe even to my Higher Power. God was my first real break-up, and once I walked away I never looked back. That is, until now. My lack of contact with a Higher Power allowed me to do unspeakable things with complete abandon. I repeat my new recovery mantra—“The enemy of my enemy is my friend”—over and over. That saying has been used on the battlefield, and it fits perfectly for me. My real enemy, after all, is a lack of connection. I need to declare war on this addiction. My best ally, scary as it can be, is real intimacy with others. ■

TAKE A SEAT, PLEASE

Mark L.

I'll never forget it. She really went out of her way. She probably has no idea to this day how much she meant to me, but honestly, I think she saved my life. She sat next to me once at a meeting.

I don't remember her name—she said it when she introduced herself, but I was so foggy at the beginning, god knows what I heard. She wasn't the chair or anything, didn't have a gaggle of eager sponsees around her, didn't make any special announcements at the break. Somehow, though, she was incredibly helpful. It must have been something she said...actually, no, I don't remember her uttering anything mind-shatteringly deep.

She said she had 30 days clean—no, it was 30 years. Or was it three years? She was sober that day, and sitting there next to

no—it was a drug dream, she'd had a drug dream... Wait, actually, it was her gratitude she shared about.

“ I DIDN'T FEEL SO ALONE ANYMORE. ”

me, I remember that. And she smiled a lot. Even though I think she had a problem she was working through, something about her job. No—it was her love life. No,

I was shy, didn't talk to anyone. Maybe because I was in a foul mood—I was so scared that night. And so angry. Angry that I couldn't have a margarita like a normal person on a June evening, angry about my money situation, angry over my sex life. But she was there smiling, staying sober for another day. And although I didn't know anyone and didn't understand all the gobbledy-gook on the banners behind the speaker—I didn't even want to be there that night—I felt a lot better next to her. I didn't feel so alone anymore.

I wish I remembered her name. Maybe she was you? ■

MEETINGS THIS LIST IS UPDATED REGULARLY AT NYCMA.ORG

SUNDAY

- 11:30 AM **Sunday Solutions (c)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 6:00 PM **Step Meeting† (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 7:30 PM **Beginner's Basics (c)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center

MONDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
 6:00 PM **Relapse Prevention (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **NA Book Study (o)** Realization Center
 8:00 PM **59th Street Bridge Back to Life (c)** 30-52 35 St., Astoria
 8:00 PM **CT #1 Beginners (o)** St. Paul's on the Green, 60 East Ave., Norwalk, CT

TUESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
 6:00 PM **Recovering Together (o)** GMHC
 7:30 PM **Beginners Meeting†† (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Long-Term Sobriety (c)** GMHC

WEDNESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
 6:30 PM **Harlem Renaissance (c)** Harlem United CAC
 7:45 PM **Solutions in Recovery (c)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Conscious Contact/11th Step (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center

THURSDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
 6:30 PM **CMA Agnostics (c)** GMHC
 8:00 PM **Big Book Study (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center

FRIDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power (c)** GMHC
 6:15 PM **Living With HIV (c)** Hudson Guild Fulton Center
 8:00 PM **Crystal Clear†† (o)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:30 PM **The O'Toole Meeting (c)** French Church

SATURDAY

- 11:15 AM **Saturday Solutions††† (c)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 5:00 PM **CMA Promises Meeting (o)** Manhattan Plaza Health Club
 8:00 PM **Meditation Meeting†††† (c)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 9:30 PM **Intimacy, Relationships & Sex in Sobriety (c)** Lesbian & Gay Community Center

MEETING DETAILS

(o) Open Meeting: Welcomes anyone interested in the CMA program. In addition to regular CMA members, this can include friends and family members seeking information for a loved one, or those curious about the program and not sure if it is right for them. **(c) Closed meeting:** Welcomes anyone who has, or thinks he or she might have, a problem with crystal meth.

†The last Sunday of every month is a Traditions meeting. ††Meeting lasts 1½ hours.

†††Meeting lasts 1hr 15min. ††††Please try to arrive on time so as not to interrupt the silent-meditation portion of the meeting. Last Saturday of each month will be a guided meditation meeting.

DIRECTIONS

- **French Church** 128 W. 16th St., Ground Floor
- **GMHC** 446 West 33rd St., between 9th and 10th Avenues
- **Harlem United CAC** 290 Lenox Avenue, between 124th and 125th Streets, Lower Level
- **The Hudson Guild Fulton Center** 119 9th Avenue, between 17th & 18th Streets
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Community Services Center** 208 West 13th Street, between 7th and 8th avenues. Check listings at front desk for room number.
- **Manhattan Plaza Health Club** 482 West 43rd Street, Conference Room Minnesota 1
- **Realization Center** 25 East 15th Street, 7th Floor

How is CMA different than other Twelve Step programs?

We have found that we relate best to other crystal meth addicts because they understand the darkness, paranoia and compulsions of this particular addiction. The Twelve Steps of CMA were adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. We do not believe we are better or worse than those in other Twelve Step programs. At the same time, many of us fail to fully identify with "a falling-down drunk" or, in the case of a heroin addict, "a nodding-off junkie." The hyper-extended length and intensity of crystal meth's effects, be it compulsive cleaning or sexual activity, were unique. Many of us have attended other Twelve Step programs, but the feeling of identification in the Rooms of CMA has helped us to keep coming back. After all, who but another meth addict understands the insanity that accompanies the high and, finally, that seemingly bottomless drop into depression that makes us desperate to use still more?

—Excerpted from the new CMA General Service pamphlet titled "What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?" Copies may be downloaded free of charge at crystalmeth.org.



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